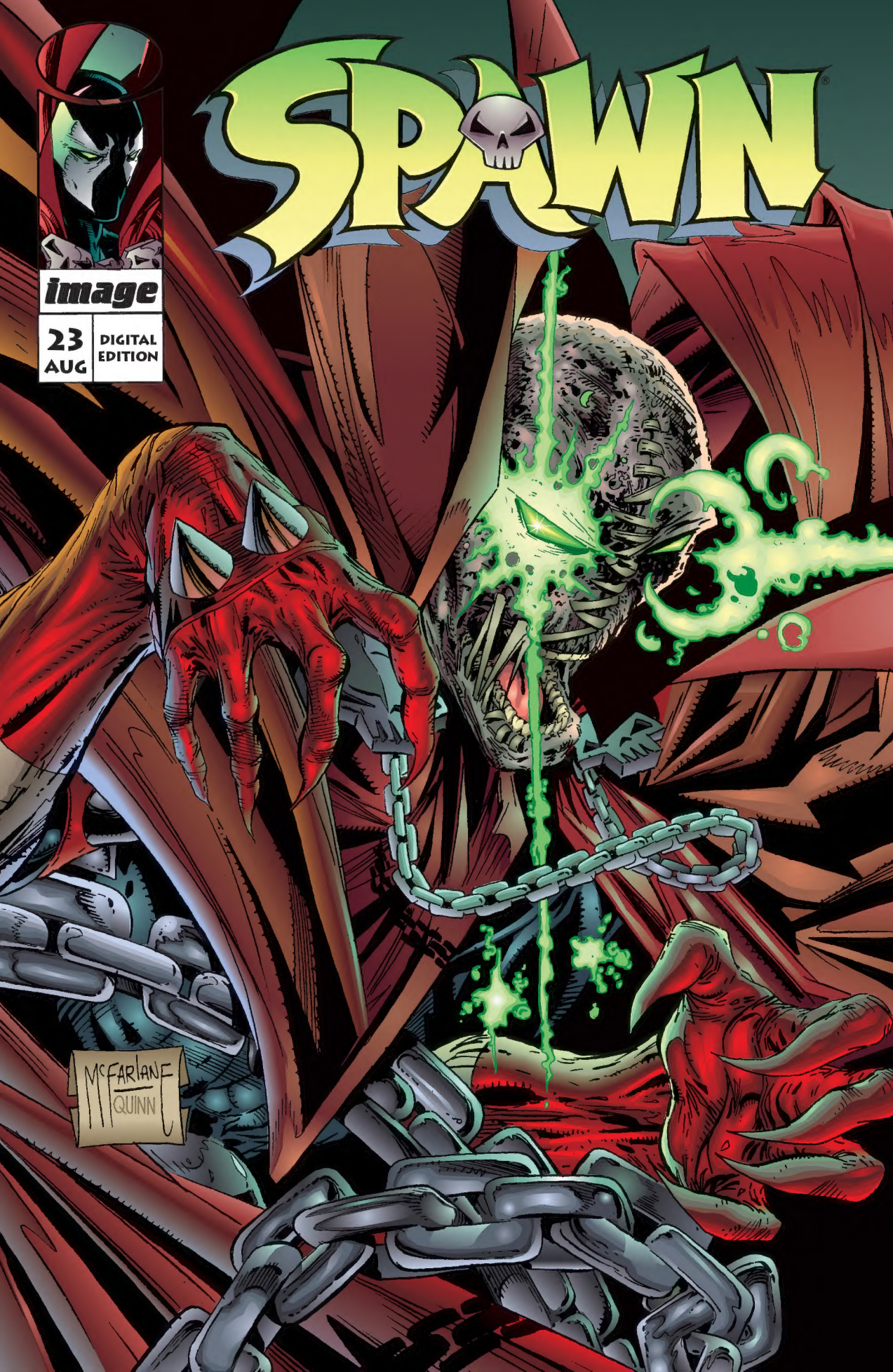




image

23
AUG **DIGITAL**
EDITION

SPAWN



McFARIANE
QUINN

image COMICS PRESENTS:

"the HUNT"

PART 3



story & art
TODD McFARLANE

special thanks to
GREG CAPULLO

copy editor & letters
TOM ORZECOWSKI

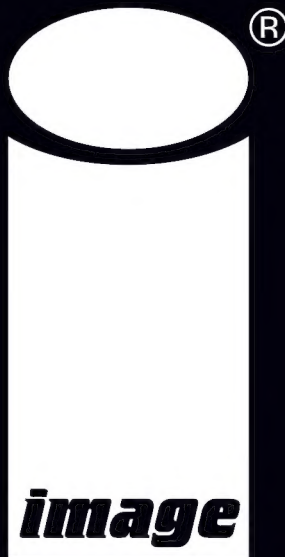
color
STEVE OLIFF
and **OLYOPTICS**

Dedicated to:
DON THOMPSON

FOR IMAGE COMICS
LARRY MARDER - exec. director TONY LOBITO - publisher

SPAWN #23, Digital Edition. Published by IMAGE COMICS P.O. Box 25468 Anaheim, CA 92825. Spawn®, its logo and its symbol are Registered Trademarks 1994 of Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All other related characters are Trademark™ and Copyright© 1994 Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All Rights reserved. Any similarities to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Todd McFarlane.

Director Of Creative Development: TERRY FITZGERALD.
Graphics Coordinator: JULIA SIMMONS.



image



JASON WYNN: HEAD OF THE UNITED STATES SECURITY GROUP, THE HIGHEST-LEVEL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

HIS SECURITY STATUS HAS BEEN COMPROMISED, AND THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE IS NOT PLEASED. WYNN IS UNDER PRESSURE TO RESTORE HIS REPUTATION IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY. TERRY FITZGERALD, A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCE, HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE SOURCE OF THE TENSION... AND IS NOW IN DANGER OF HIS LIFE, AT WYNN'S DIRECTION.



SPAWN: AGENT OF HELL.

HIS VERY EXISTENCE HAS SET INTO MOTION A CRAZY RIPPLE EFFECT, WITH INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE AROUND HIM. SPAWN SIMPLY WANTS TO CREATE AND NURTURE A FAMILY, BUT THAT DESIRE HAS ALREADY DAMNED HIM AND NOW INADVERTANTLY THREATENS ALL WHO TRUST HIM.



VITO GRAVANO: MAFIA DON.

HIS OPERATIONS HAD RUN SMOOTHLY FOR YEARS, BUT LATELY AN UNKNOWN ATTACKER HAS SLAUGHTERED A NUMBER OF HIS MEN. GRAVANO HAS FOCUSED ON REMOVING THIS BLEMISH... SPAWN, HE BELIEVES... FROM THE FACE OF HIS CITY. HE IS UNAWARE THAT SOME OF THE INFORMATION DRIVING HIS HUNT IS INACCURATE.



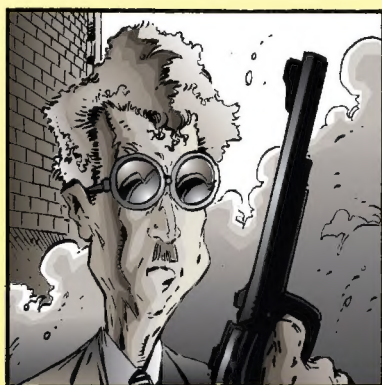
WANDA BLAKE: WIDOW OF LT. COL. AL SIMMONS, A.K.A. SPAWN.

WANDA IS NOW HAPPILY MARRIED TO HER LATE HUSBAND'S BEST FRIEND, TERRY FITZGERALD, WITH WHOM SHE HAS A DAUGHTER, CYAN. SHE IS CURRENTLY UNAWARE OF AL'S LIFE STATUS, OR OF THE VICIOUS WEB IN WHICH TERRY IS RAPIDLY FINDING HIMSELF ENSNARED.



SAM BURKE: DETECTIVE, N.Y.P.D.

NOW CLEARED OF WRONGDOING IN THE DEATH OF CHILDKILLER BILLY KINCAID, BURKE IS ALLOWING HIMSELF THE LUXURY OF BRUTALITY IN THE NAME OF FACT GATHERING. SOMEONE (OR SOMETHING) CAUSED HIS SUPERIORS TO QUESTION HIS LOYALTY, AND HE WANTS TO HAVE WORDS WITH THIS INDIVIDUAL.



"TWITCH" WILLIAMS: DETECTIVE, N.Y.P.D.

THIS FATHER OF SEVEN IS ONE OF THE STATE'S TOP SHARPSHOOTERS. HIS SENSE OF FAIRNESS WORKS COUNTERPOINT TO HIS PARTNER BURKE'S OCCASIONAL LAPSES. METHODOLOGY AND ARM-TWISTING HAVE LED THE PAIR TO THEIR QUARRY-- THE COSTUMED MYSTERY MAN WHO HAS A FEW SERIOUS QUESTIONS TO ANSWER.

THESE ARE THE MAJOR PLAYERS IN AN INCREASINGLY TWISTED GAME OF CAT AND MOUSE. EACH IS SOMEHOW CONNECTED TO THE STRANGE EXISTENCE OF A DEAD MAN BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE. STRIPPED OF HIS IDENTITY... CHARGED WITH TREMENDOUS BUT EXHAUSTABLE POWER... AWAKENED FIVE YEARS AFTER HIS TIME TO FIND HIS WIFE REMARRIED... THESE WERE THE REALITIES AWAITING A MAN IN LOVE--

-- GIFTS GIVEN BY SOME UNHOLY CREATURE OF HELL.

A PRISONER OF HIS NEW LIFE ON EARTH, SPAWN'S ACTIONS HAVE TRIGGERED SEVERAL MANHUNTS BY VERY INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE. NONE IS PREPARED FOR WHAT TRUTH MAY EMERGE FROM THEIR INVESTIGATIONS...



... AND THE UNFOLDING TRAGEDY IS THAT AN INNOCENT MAN IS THE PRIME SUSPECT.

THIS BRINGS US TO TERRY FITZGERALD.

THROUGH STRAINED CIRCUMSTANCES, HE HAS BECOME THE TARGET OF NUMEROUS GROUPS:

C.I.A.

POLICE.

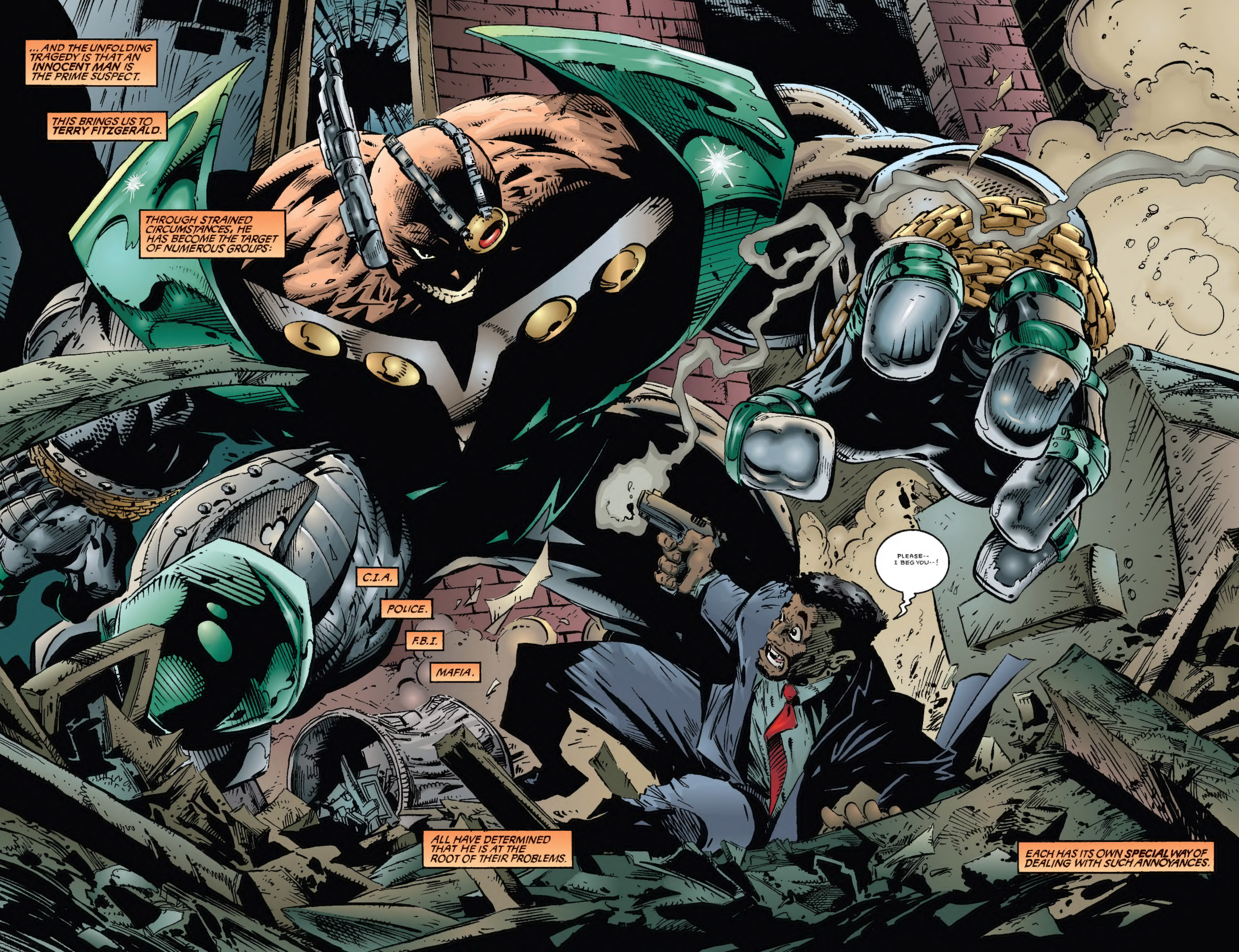
F.B.I.

MAFIA.

ALL HAVE DETERMINED THAT HE IS AT THE ROOT OF THEIR PROBLEMS.

EACH HAS ITS OWN SPECIAL WAY OF DEALING WITH SUCH ANNOYANCES.

PLEASE--
I BEG YOU--!





GET
ON YOUR
FEET.

YOU
WANT TO BE
A **HERO**?
THEN ACT LIKE
IT. I CAME HERE
TO **DESTROY**
A MAN.

NOT SOME
COVERING
DOG!

I SAID,
GET UP,
HERO!!

SINCE HIS
RECONSTRUCTION,
OVERKILL HAS
BEEN PROGRAMMED
TO BELIEVE HE NOW
FACES **SPAWN**,
WHO NEARLY
DESTROYED HIM A
FEW WEEKS AGO. *

SMAT!

SPUGK!

* ISSUES
6 AND 7
-- Tom

OK,
MY...

IT'S
HAPPENING,
JUST LIKE HE
SAID.

I'VE
GOTTA
FIND
AL.

HOW
PATHETIC
YOU'VE
BECOME.

NOT FAR AWAY...

I DON'T CARE *WHAT* YOUR HURRY IS, BUD. IT'S TIME FOR US TO HAVE A LITTLE CHAT. NOW STEP AWAY FROM THE WALL.

WATCH HIM, TWITCH.

TAKEN CARE OF, SIR.

I'M NOT ABOUT TO MOVE FOR YOU...

...CAUSE I'M LEAVING HERE, WITH OR WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION.

YOU CAN EITHER FOLLOW AND HELP ME-- OR GET OUT OF MY WAY BEFORE I HURT YOU. THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

LISTEN HERE, YOU FRIGGIN' FREAK...

NO, **YOU** LISTEN!

I'VE GOT A FRIEND WHO'S IN DESPERATE NEED OF HELP AGAINST THE MAFIA'S CYBORG HITMAN... BECAUSE OF FALSE INFORMATION FROM C.I.A. AND F.B.I. OFFICIALS.

EVEN THE POLICE HAVE HELPED SCREW THIS UP. UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T FIND MY WEAPONS IN ALL THIS GARBAGE, SO I'LL HAVE TO THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE.



WHAT DO YOU THINK, SIR?

AIN'T NO WAY HE'S WALKING AWAY FROM US NOW!

HE'S BEEN A BLEEDING ULCER IN MY GUT FOR TOO LONG. I'M NOT GOING TO LET HIM SAVE HIS BUTT BY HIDING BEHIND. SOME COCKAMAMIE STORY.

GO SCREW YOURSELF, FAT MAN.

I SAID YOU'RE WELCOME TO JOIN ME, BUT I GUARANTEE THAT THIS ROBOT ISN'T EVEN GOING TO FEEL THOSE PEA-SHOOTERS YOU'RE PACKING.

THAT'S WHY I WAS LOOKING FOR MY CANNONS.* WE NEED FIRE-POWER... BIG TIME.

* SEEN IN ISSUE 7 --Tom--

FREEZE,
YOU MORON!
BEFORE WE SHOOT!



SUDDENLY...

**AL!
AL!**

IT'S HAPPENING!
YOU'VE GOTTA COME!

Uk?

Uk?

EMILY?!



GUY'S AS BIG AS A HOUSE!
ALL SHINY AND NEW--! BUT THE GUY HE'S POUNDING AIN'T LIFTING A FINGER.

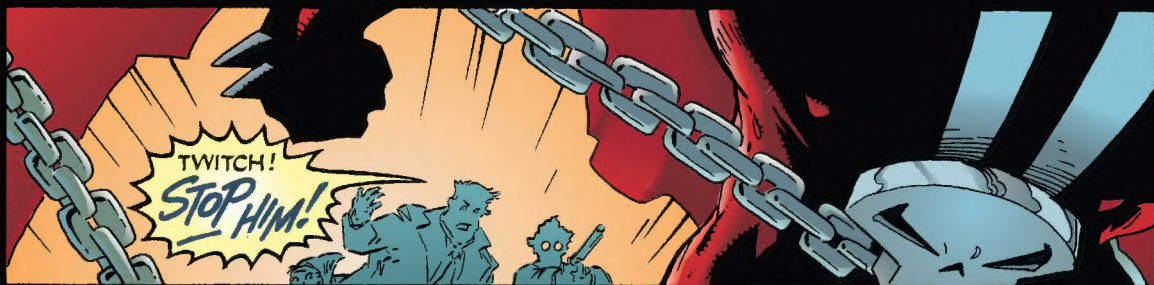
I THINK HE'S DEAD.

DAMMIT, NO.

SPAWN BOLTS, CURSING HIMSELF FOR THIS DELAY.

AS A GOVERNMENT ASSASSIN, HE WAS TRAINED TO STAY FOCUSED.

IT'S OBVIOUS HE'S LOSING HIS EDGE.



DETECTIVE WILLIAMS LINES UP HIS TARGET. SPAWN'S CHAOTIC MOVEMENTS DON'T DISTRACT HIM. NOR DOES THE FLOWING CAPE WHICH CONCEALS MOST OF HIS FORM. "TWITCH" WAITS FOR JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT.

THE SHOT IS A DIRECT HIT, TEARING THROUGH CARTILAGE AND SHATTERING A KNEECAP. IT'S THE FASTEST WAY TO DISABLE AN ASSAILANT.

SPAWN NEVER BREAKS STRIDE AS HE DISAPPEARS INTO THE UNLIT ALLEYWAY.

KRAK!

TWITCH--
I THOUGHT
YOU--

I DID,
SIR!

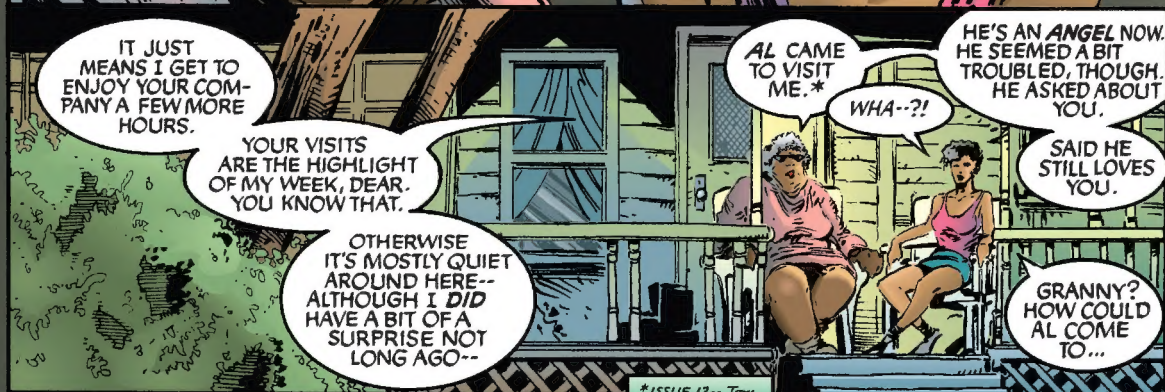
I DID!

SHOCK.

THEN
REALITY
SETS
BACK IN.
SAM AND
TWITCH
DART
AFTER THE
FLEEING
HERO.

JEEZ!

THIS IS
GETTING
NUTS!



MR. WYNN.

WE'VE JUST RECEIVED WORD THAT TWO F.B.I. AGENTS WERE SLAIN OUTSIDE THE HOME OF TERRY FITZGERALD.

THE HOUSE WAS UNDER SURVEILLANCE DUE TO INFORMATION PROVIDED THE BUREAU FROM THIS OFFICE.

OUR AGENTS WERE ABLE TO GET THERE AHEAD OF THE POLICE, BUT THE SITUATION IS GROWING RATHER TENSE.

THE F.B.I. OPERATIVES WERE KILLED BY TWO GUNMEN, MOST LIKELY FROM THE MAFIA.

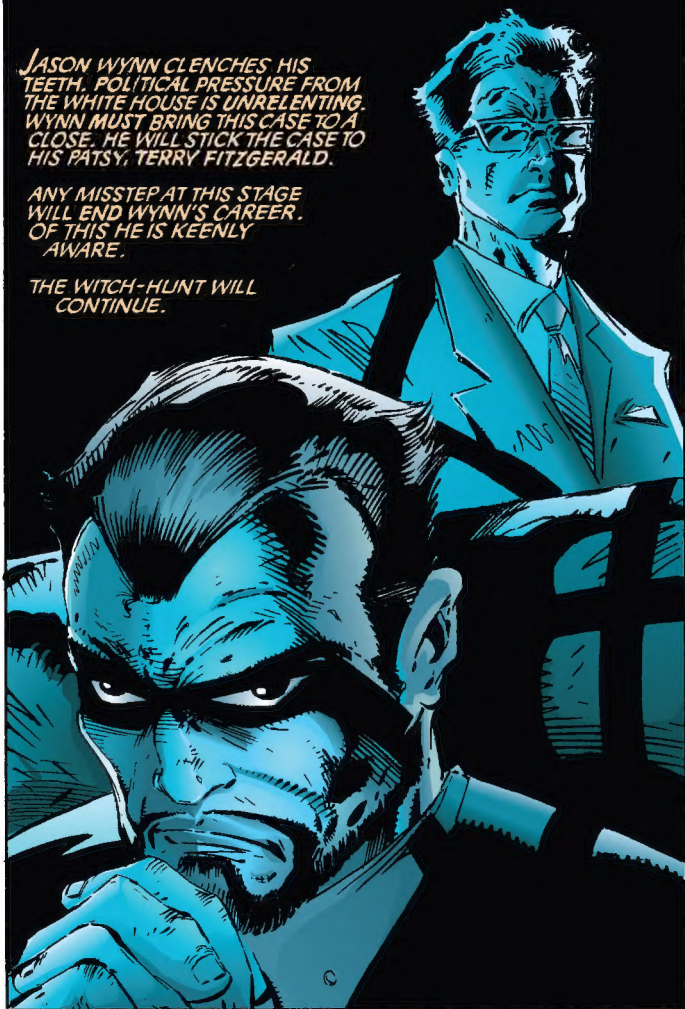
WHETHER FITZGERALD HAS MOB CONNECTIONS HAS NOT BEEN DETERMINED AT THIS TIME.

SO FAR, FITZGERALD IS IN THE CLEAR.

JASON WYNN CLENCHES HIS TEETH. POLITICAL PRESSURE FROM THE WHITE HOUSE IS UNRELENTING. WYNN MUST BRING THIS CASE TO A CLOSE. HE WILL STICK THE CASE TO HIS PATSY, TERRY FITZGERALD.

ANY MISSTEP AT THIS STAGE WILL END WYNN'S CAREER. OF THIS HE IS KEENLY AWARE.

THE WITCH-HUNT WILL CONTINUE.



UNFORTUNATELY, FITZGERALD WAS NOT BEHIND THE SECURITY BREACHES WHICH EMBARRASSED WYNN-- AND WYNN KNOWS IT.

NOW, HIS UGLY TACTICS HAVE BACKFIRED, AND TWO F.B.I. AGENTS ARE DEAD. WYNN WEIGHS HIS CHOICES COLDLY.

GET TO THE NEIGHBORS.

NOW.



ACROSS
TOWN...

WHAT
WERE YOU
THINKING
?!!

BOSS...
WE HAD NO
IDEA THAT
THE FEDS
WOULD
BE...

QUIET!

LISTEN.
I'M ONLY
GOING TO SAY
THIS *ONCE*. YOUR
ORDERS WERE TO
GET FITZGERALD TO
A RENDEZVOUS
WITH OVERT-
KILL.

PERIOD!

...NOT TO KILL
TWO F.B.I. AGENTS! *
I DON'T *NEED*
THAT KIND OF
ATTENTION.

THE
CARTEL'S
ALREADY
BUSTING MY
BALLS!

*LAST
ISSUE
--Tom--

I'VE GOT ENOUGH
PROBLEMS ALREADY. *
YOU GO BACK OUT THERE
AND MAKE THIS GO AWAY.
AND I DON'T MEAN A
LITTLE BIT, I MEAN
ALL OF IT!

CAPICE?

YES,
SIR...

GOOD...

*VIOLATOR
MINI-SERIES,
ISSUE 3 --Tom--



HE WAS.





UNGH!

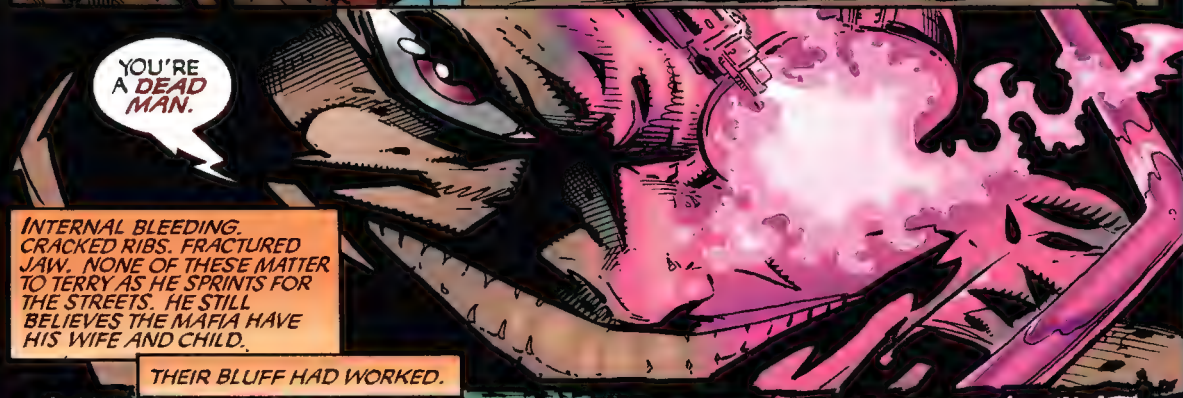
FROM DENSE
SHADOWS COMES A
CRIMSON BLUR.

ITS MOVEMENTS
ARE QUICK.
DELIBERATE.

MOVING WITH
SPECIFIC INTENT,
IT SNATCHES
TERRY'S
BATTERED BODY...

... AND TOUCHES
DOWN 20 FEET
AWAY, KNEE DEEP
IN GARBAGE.

HEY!



BEFORE SPAWN CAN MOVE, HIS CAPE DOES. TO THIS POINT, HIS COSTUME HAD ONLY COME TO LIFE WHILE PROTECTING ITS HOST.

TONIGHT, IT SENSED A FURTHER USE.

ZAT!

SPAWN GRABS A STRAY TWO-BY-FOUR. HE KNOWS IT CAN CAUSE NO DAMAGE... BUT IT CAN OFFER A SLIGHT DISTRACTION...

... ONE THAT WILL ALLOW TERRY TO ESCAPE.

SWAK!

FINALLY! MY PROPER TARGET. WITH-OUT YOUR GUN...

...YOU'RE NOTHING!

puff / puff

CRIPES!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!

I => puff < DON'T KNOW, SIR--

POW!
KRAK!
SMET!

"... BUT OBVIOUSLY HE
WASN'T LYING TO US."

"WHICH MEANS THERE
JUST MAY BE A MULTI-
AGENCY MANHUNT
GOING ON."

"JUST MY LUCK."

ZAT!!

"CRAP!"

"THAT MEANS THE
REST OF HIS STORY'S
PROBABLY TRUE,
TWITCH."

"SIR?"

"YEAH! YEAH!
I'M THINKING!"

"WE CAN'T AFFORD THAT MUCH TIME..."

"BECAUSE UNLESS
WE TERMINATE THIS
BATTLE, WE'RE NOT
GOING TO GET ANY
ANSWERS FROM
THIS 'AL' GUY!"

CAR'S
TOO FAR AWAY
FOR US TO RADIO
IN. SO-- WE'VE
ONLY GOT ONE
CHOICE--

--SHOOT!

PING

PING

PING

TIME
TO POP
THAT ZIT
YOU CALL
A HEAD.

TIRES SCREECH. A DOOR SNAPS OPEN. OUT BOLTS WANDA BLAKE.

DURING THE DRIVE HOME SHE WAS IN A NEAR FRENZY OVER WHAT SHE'D BEEN TOLD. MAYBE THIS PART WAS TRUE... OR THAT... OR THAT. BUT TERRY...? NO. SOMETHING IS WRONG HERE.

HEY LADY! MY FARE!!

MS. BLAKE!

MS. BLAKE!!

AS SHE NEARS THE CLUSTER OF POLICE, REPORTERS AND GAWKERS HER HEART SKIPS A BEAT, THEN CONTINUES TO POUND LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO EXPLODE.

IS IT TRUE YOUR HUSBAND KILLED

F.B.I.

TRAITOR

FLED THE SCENE

MURDER

SHE'S ASSAULTED WITH A HUNDRED QUESTIONS AND THIRTY VERSIONS OF THE EVENTS. SIMULTANEOUSLY.

EXCUSE ME, FOLKS. LET ME PASS.

MS. BLAKE!

MS. BLAKE!

I'M SORRY, MA'AM. THINGS DON'T LOOK GOOD RIGHT NOW. I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO COME DOWN TO THE STATION.

THERE'S BEEN A MULTIPLE MURDER, AND NO SIGN OF YOUR HUSBAND. WE'VE PUT OUT AN A.P.B. CALLING FOR HIS ARREST...

No!

PLEASE!

NOT TERRY!

NOT MY TERRY!

IT CAN'T BE!



SPOTTING A HANDFUL OF NEIGHBORS HUDDLED ACROSS THE STREET, WANDA RACES TO THEM.

PLEASE!

YOU MUST HAVE SEEN SOMETHING! ANYTHING!



PLEASE, YOU'VE GOT TO HELP. THIS CAN'T BE TRUE!

THIS CAN'T BE TRUE

MR. HORNE?

ANNE?



WE'VE SEEN NOTHING.



I'M SORRY.

WANDA IS FAR TOO LATE. JASON WYNN'S MEN HAD ALREADY "CONSULTED" WITH HER NEIGHBORS.

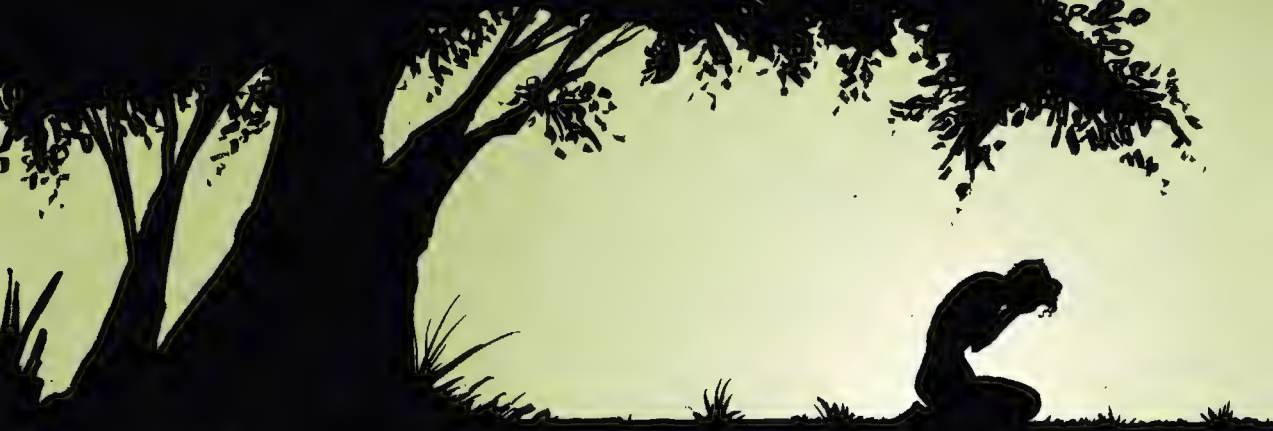
YOU SEE, ANDREW AND KAREN HORNE THESE KIND AND GENEROUS PEOPLE, WERE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

AN INSURANCE ADJUSTER FOR OVER SEVENTEEN YEARS, CHRIS ALBRECHT LED A FAIRLY MUNDANE LIFE.

FOR THREE YEARS IN THE MID-SEVENTIES, THOUGH, HE DIDN'T FILE HIS INCOME TAX FORMS. AN AUDIT AT THIS TIME WOULD RUIN HIM.

AS FOR ANNE THOMOPOULOS, SHE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PLEASANT NEIGHBOR. NICE FAMILY, TOO. BUT SHE HAS A SKELETON IN HER CLOSET.

SHE HAD A CHILD OUT OF WEDLOCK-- A SON-- WHEN SHE WAS SEVENTEEN. AT PRESENT HE IS IN JAIL FOR CAR THEFT. HIS PAROLE HEARING IS IN TWO MONTHS. SHE'S BEEN PROMISED HIS FREEDOM.



AS THE FINAL DOOR IS LATCHED,
SHE FALLS TO HER KNEES,
SOBBING.

WANDA NEVER WANTED TO ADMIT IT TO HERSELF, BUT SHE ALWAYS KNEW THIS DAY WOULD COME. BEING A WIDOW TO ONE GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE AGENT WASN'T ENOUGH, SHE HAD TO GO MARRY ANOTHER. SHE'D ACTED AS IF, BY KEEPING A SAFE DISTANCE FROM THEIR WORK, SHE WOULD SHIELD THEM ALL FROM ANY CONSEQUENCES OF... WELL, WHATEVER THAT WORK WAS. "IGNORANCE IS BLISS," SHE'D TOLD HERSELF.

THAT ILLUSION HAS JUST BEEN SHATTERED... TERMINALLY. WANDA KNOWS SHE'D'VE SEEN WARNING LIGHTS FLASHING IF ONLY SHE'D OPENED HER EYES A BIT WIDER.

SHE SAYS A QUICK
PRAYER FOR HER CHILD,
WHO'S BEEN LEFT...
THANK GOD...
AT GRANNY BLAKE'S.

THEN, SHE BREAKS DOWN AGAIN,
HER BODY JERKING WITH EACH BREATH.

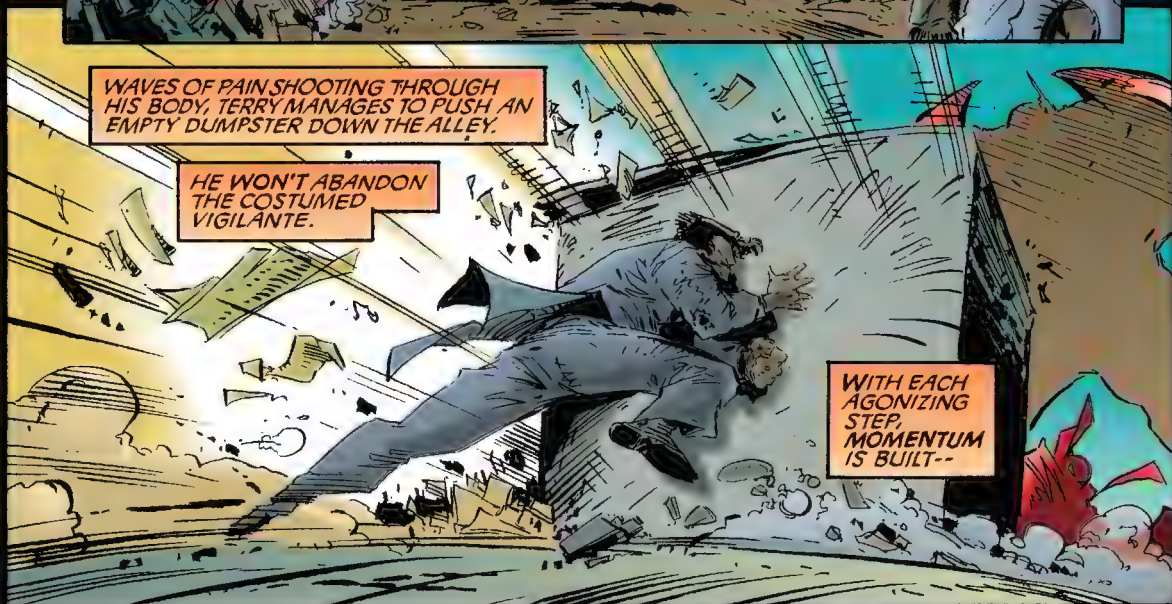
TRAGICALLY, HER PRIVACY IS
SHORT-LIVED AS THE ASSEMBLED
NEWSHOUNDS POUNCE,
FEEDING ON HER GRIEF.




WAVES OF PAIN SHOOTING THROUGH
HIS BODY, TERRY MANAGES TO PUSH AN
EMPTY DUMPSTER DOWN THE ALLEY.

HE WON'T ABANDON
THE COSTUMED
VIGILANTE.

WITH EACH
AGONIZING
STEP,
MOMENTUM
IS BUILT--





-- JUST ENOUGH TO
TOPPLE A 1200-LB.
CYBORG THAT
WAS ALREADY
OFF-BALANCE.

WHA-?!

WHAK!

IDIOT!

I THOUGHT
YOU'D FLED!

WERE YOU
WAITING FOR
YOUR FRIEND?
HERE HE IS!

UNFEK!

WHAT'RE
YA DOIN',
TWITCH?
YOUR GUN'S
USELESS!

I'VE
GOT AN
IDEA,
SIR.



BLAM!

WITH UNCANNY ACCURACY, THE BULLET ENTERS OVERTKILL'S BODY THROUGH A SMALL OPENING IN THE EAR CAVITY...

... INTERRUPTING THE ELECTRIC FLOW FOR A NANOSECOND.

TWITCH HAD HOPED TO CAUSE SOME SYSTEMIC DISRUPTION.

THE RESULT WAS COMPLETELY UNEXPECTED.

YOUNGBLOOD.
BADROCK.
YOUNGBLOOD.
BADROCK.
BADROCK.

THE CYBORG LUMBERS OFF. IT HAS A NEW DIRECTIVE. *

*SEE YOUNGBLOOD #7--Tom.!



WHAT A
BLOODY
MESS.

QUITE
LITERALLY.

CONCLUDED
NEXT ISSUE.





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE